



Jeany's

FINE WINES AND SPIRITS

**"If it tastes good...
drink it"**

Grapes were one of the earliest fruits used to make spirits. Distillation was not known in Europe before the 9th or 10th centuries and the first comprehensive publication of brandy making was about 1500.

Anyone can make a brandy, simply by distilling the fermented juice of any fruit. We have apple brandy (calvados) plum brandy (slivovitz) and cherry brandy (kirsh).

The most famous brandy is Cognac, that French spirit of the highest quality and considerable maturity. Cognac was first noted by name in 1678. Armagnac, a close French relative of the Cognac claims to be the first brandy with a birth date of 1411. The main difference between the two (besides grape and area) is that Cognac is 72% alcoholic product of double distillation in a pot still, where Armagnac comes off a continuous still at 55% alcoholic strength.

A brandy can only be called Cognac if it is made in the French region of the same name. Cognac, on France's west coast is an area of some 93,000 hectares and involves 30,000 growers.

There are seven defined sub regions in Cognac, in descending order of quality they are: Grand Champagne, Petite Cham-

pagne, Borderies, Fins Bois, Bons Bois, Bois Ordinaire and Bois a Terroir. If it is a blend of at least 50% Grand Champagne, with the remainder from petite Champagne, the Cognac can be labelled Fine Champagne. Champagne, on a cognac label, has nothing to do with sparkling wine, and refers only to open fields.

A three star Cognac is matured in white oak casks for a minimum of 5 to 7 years. The legal minimum is 30 months, about the same as an Australian commercial brandy.

Three Star: VS, Celebration, Signature or Deluxe. They usually have an average age of 3 to 5 years.

VSOP: Reserve, TVFC, Medaillon, and VO. Has an average age of 7 to 10 years.

Napoleon: Cordon Noir, Cordon Rubis, Antique and pale and Dry. Most have an average age 15 to 25 years. Cognac like all spirits ceases to age once it has been bottled.

XO: Most of the large Cognac houses produce a small amount of XO also called Extra, Ville Reserve, Cordon Bleu. These brandies have had 40 or 50 years in oak.

There are rarer and more expensive

blends that may reach 100 years of age. Some examples are Hennessy Paradis, Remy Martin Louis X111 and Centaure Cristal. The first pot still made in Australia was installed in the 1890s in the Horndale distillery, north of Adelaide. Seppelt's records note that the first distillery at their Barossa Valley operations was erected in 1877.

By 1920s brandy making was firmly established in SA and Mildura. Today, these areas and Griffith are the main brandy producing areas. Two distinct types of Australian Brandy are marketed, the first are our commercial brands like Black Bottle, Mildara and Tolleys. The second type may have aged in wood for 20 years or more, like Seppeltsfield Show VSOP, Yalumba Old Pot Still, and Mildara Pot Still 25 years old.

In Australia, the brandy drinker is fortunate that only fresh grapes can be used in its production; dried grapes, or grape concentrate are not allowed. Most cheap imported brandies are made by distilling pressings, the pomace, and there is no guarantee that non grape spirit has not been used.

Try one of these excellent Australian Brandies.

Our Specials this month are:

Seppeltsfield Show Brandy VSOP.

This excellent brandy has been produced from selected pot still brandies matured in small oak barrels and blended. The average age is 28 years. \$42.00 each.

Mildara Pot Still Brandy 25 years

old. The key to the quality of the spirit are the hand crafted Pot Stills used to distill the wine at Mildara's cellars. Pot Still has been awarded 40 gold medals since 1982. \$38.00 each.

Family Law Group Meeting

The Family Law Group meets on the last Tuesday of November at 1pm in the Council Room of The Law Society. If you are interested in attending meetings or have any queries regarding the Family Law Group, contact The Society for details on 81 5104.

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